

## ABSTRACT

A method and apparatus for two-stage packet classification, the two-stage packet classification scheme including a first stage and a second stage. In the first classification stage, a packet is classified on the basis of the packet's network path. In the second stage of classification, the packet is classified on the basis of one or more transport (or other) fields of the packet. Also disclosed are embodiments of most specific filter matching and transport level sharing, and either one or both of these techniques may be implemented in the two-stage classification method.